

# *The Midland*

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## **I Now, Walt Whitman**

By WILLARD WATTLES

I now, Walt Whitman,  
In the twenty-fifth year of my wandering with in-  
visible footstep  
Raising no dust in the green paths of heaven,  
More alive now than I was in Camden, more so even  
than in Manhattan,  
Come from knitting with gossamer windings the  
hearts of many who love me,  
Finding me uninvited an intruder into their cham-  
bers  
Never again to be banished —  
I alive now, happy, rejoicing in manhood and in the  
increasing manliness and tenderness of lovers,  
Salute you, who thought I could lie still and not  
remember

The flesh and the body, the roughs as well as the  
gentle

(As if when a man has written a book, he will never  
start in on another,

And as if I had not spoken the truth when I told  
them I should not lie still in my coffin,

But should be continually out on the open road).

I have published myself many times since I left the  
old rocker,

And many have thought that what they had written  
had something within it,

But few have acknowledged whose hand has been  
laid on their shoulder.

Here in the West, born of the sun and the prairie,  
Like myself in many things, tenderness, courage, de-  
votion, knowing some things that I knew not,  
Yet lacking in wisdom — humble, though, and yield-  
ing with perfect faith to my guidance,

(He himself could not say these things, but I can  
say them),

He I have chosen is setting in words not so resistless  
as mine were,

Still with a witness of earnest about them  
My most undeniable message.

Come, now, ye who have sworn by my pages, making  
out of my frankness a cult that I never intended,

Fearing the open, lurking in pestilent cities, and  
hectic with milling together,

In what was purest and manliest in me finding excuse  
for your ordure,

With delicate fingers picking my body to pieces,  
Have done, I disown you!

The perfect body singing its ample justification,  
The open-handed candor of the dawn seen through  
the inter-lacing pine-trees:

I take the road, but leave my staff behind!

## **Realizing America in Poetry: Vachel Lindsay's "The Chinese Nightingale"**

By NELSON ANTRIM CRAWFORD

Probably no man has made a sincerer effort to realize the United States, particularly the Middle West, in poetry than has Mr. Vachel Lindsay, and his latest volume, *The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems* (New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.25), pushing still further in this direction, will please Americans who care for art but are not colonial-minded about it. Mr. Lindsay still shows some of the faults of the United States, but his fine independence and individuality and his real poetic spirit give to his work a relish that more than compensates for occasional provinciality.

Next to Mr. Lindsay's intensely American spirit, the most striking characteristic of his work is the extremely slight part that sex themes play in his poems. At a time when the researches of Freud, Jung, and other psychoanalysts have given sex the dominant place in life and when every type of literature has reacted to the new conceptions, Mr. Lindsay treats sex as incidentally as if he were writing stories for children. His attitude is not that of the unintelligent, middle-class American who tries to suppress sex. Mr. Lindsay does not suppress it at all — he simply pays no attention to it. He gets at life from other angles — a very interesting thing to

do when so many writers are united in a single point of view.

*The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems* contains three outstanding contributions—the title poem; “*This, My Song, is made for Kerensky*,” and *How Samson Bore Away the Gates of Gaza*.

*The Chinese Nightingale*, which, by the way, won the Levinson Prize in 1915, has a sheer beauty rarely found in a poem of its length. In certain superficial respects it suggests Mr. Noyes’s *Flower of Old Japan*, but it has none of the allegory which Mr. Noyes specifically attaches to his poem. *The Chinese Nightingale* seems now fantasy, now vision. At times Mr. Lindsay evokes a magic almost Celtic in its poignancy and wonder. The poem is remarkable for its conception and atmosphere more than for significant lines—an excellent quality in a long poem—but there are some rarely appropriate comparisons, such as—

A vague, unravelling, final tune,  
Like a long, unwinding silk cocoon.  
And the ending of the poem no reader will forget:  
“They spoke, I think, of perils past.  
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.  
One thing I remember:  
Spring came on forever,  
Spring came on forever,”  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

“*This, My Song, is made for Kerensky*,” bears the sub-title, “A Chant of the American Soap Box

and the Russian Revolution." It is one of a number of poems dealing with the war. Mr. Lindsay's use of repetition of line and epithet was never more effective than in this poem, and the vigor of diction and rhythm sweeps the reader along so that he scarcely notices the occasional bizarre line.

*How Samson Bore Away the Gates of Gaza* is one of four poems interpreting the negro. In *The Congo* Mr. Lindsay made a brilliant and searching study of negro emotional reaction. His additional poems in the new volume make him quite the foremost poetic interpreter of this race. Negro poets have been narrowly Anglo-Saxon or else superficially — in matters of dialect and the like — African. Mr. Lindsay's success in portraying the negro character shows that the white man often understands the black better than the latter understands himself.

The rest of Mr. Lindsay's book is very uneven; it comprises some excellent poems and some exceedingly unpoetic ones. The author still shows, though to a less extent than formerly, a thoroughly American, not to say Middle Western, fault. Americans, and especially people in the Middle West, like preaching — and preaching about social issues, not spiritual verities. Mr. Lindsay occasionally forgets that he is a poet, and becomes a preacher of a wholly Methodist sort. In *The Drunkard's Funeral*, for example, "the busy little sister with the funny little tract" states the moral that she sees: "The saloon must go." That is insufficient for the author. He must go ahead and indorse her point of view:

"You are right, little sister," I said to myself.  
"You are right, good sister," I said.  
"Though you wear a mussy bonnet  
On your little gray head,  
You are right, little sister," I said.

Some of the poems in the volume are filled with this emphasis on moral teaching, which never rises to the all-consuming fervor that makes art. The omission of half a dozen of the thirty-odd poems in the collection would improve the work.

One section of the book is devoted to "poem games" first presented in Chicago. In these, dancing and chanting are expected to add to the effect of the words. *How Samson Bore Away the Gates of Gaza* is included in this group, though it is quite different from the others. One of the poems, *The King of Yellow Butterflies*, is rearranged from *Rhymes to be Traded for Bread*, the pamphlet which Mr. Lindsay carried on one of his walking trips in the Middle West. The poem games are all quite delightful. They keep before the reader Mr. Lindsay's view of poetry as a song art — a view too important ever to be pushed out of sight. It is to be hoped that Mr. Lindsay may write a book about poem games; it would prove of immeasurable worth in making poetry a reality to many persons who think themselves unpoetic.

## For a Child Named Katharine

(HEARD SPEAKING THROUGH FRITZ KREISLER'S PLAYING OF  
SCHUBERT'S BALLET MUSIC FROM "ROSAMUNDE")

By LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

*God and the Fairies, be true, be true!  
I am the child who waits for you.*

I wait for God as I go to sleep.  
I stretch out my hand for His hand to keep.  
I look for Fairies where grass is deep,  
And once where I heard a bell on the sheep.  
The Saint who comes at Christmas-time  
Is someway not so much all mine.  
He surely comes, for Christmas Day,  
But I never ask that Saint to stay.  
He brings me beautiful things to keep,  
But I liked the best the bell on the sheep.  
God and the Fairies I can not see  
Are the ones that I want to stay with me.  
They always stay with me through the night,  
But they go just before the room is light.  
It is always just God, or just Fairies, who stay,  
But I never know which, nor which is away.  
But once I woke when it was dark  
And Something made me hush and hark.  
My hand which I'd left outside on the sheet  
Was tucked very gently under my cheek.  
So I knew it was God who stayed that night —



And then I slept till it was light.  
And when my hand stays out on the bed,  
I guess the Fairies are there instead.

I think the Fairies bring the dreams,  
And when I wake and my room seems  
Very strange, because I've played  
All the night in a woodsy glade  
In my dreaming, then I know  
Fairy folk have made it so —  
Fairy folk who slide, they say,  
Into the house on a thin moon's ray.  
But always Something has been there,  
To fill my room with Day and air,  
To make me feel so sweet and wise  
Before I open up my eyes.  
But sometimes when it's bright and Day,  
I feel alone and I must pray.  
I am sure of them and yet I say,  
*"God and the Fairies, be true, be true!  
I am the child who waits for you."*

## **The Neighborhood II**

By EDWIN FORD PIPER

### **ROAD AND PATH**

O, road and path, and path and road,  
They write the story plain;  
To the picnic grounds, to the little church,  
And for water, wood, and grain.

They point to the friend, and the dearest friend,  
The gossip, the recluse;  
To the cloud of grief, and the star of love,  
And all life's human use.

There's a rain-washed mark leads up the hill  
Because two boys were chums;  
And a bridle path steals down the draw, —  
Romance in its season comes.

O, fennel and chickweed fill the ruts  
In the sunny buffalo grass;  
For Andy Marsh and his cousin Bill  
Look sidewise when they pass.

'Twas a well worn track to Heathering's farm,  
But the courting's over now;  
Mary and Belle chose husbands well,  
And Jane the veil and the vow.

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To Connor's house is a welcome road,  
And jollity is ringing;  
O, the open door and the dancing-floor,  
The laughter and the singing!

There are highways born, the old roads die, —  
Can you read what once they said?  
From the rain-worn ditch, and the sunflower clump,  
And the needs of folk long dead?

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Once more 'twas spring! The meadow-lark gave  
note

About his grassy nest, and builders hummed  
Old songs while sod on sod their houses rose.  
Through widening strips of field all rusty-black,  
The first fine blades of corn sprang laughingly, —  
And men had joy of neighbors. Fellowship  
Budded and blossomed into a schoolhouse-church  
Just where the Carico swings a wooded arm  
Across wide meadows to the upland slope.  
Twenty-five settlers brought their families  
And built as brothers build. Log after log,  
Strong hand to hand was helpful. Last, a feast  
Summoned the hearty workers.

All roads meet

At the schoolhouse-church; it gives to Fairview  
Ridge

A rallying sign, a name, a bond. Upgrows,  
Enveloping this jangling human group,  
The personality of neighborhood:

Who and whence were the neighbors? Illinois  
Sent grimy miners from the smothering pits  
To steep themselves in sunshine; and thin clerks  
Came from great cities, asking health and strength  
From the open prairie; renters from New York  
And Pennsylvania; the Georgia cracker;

Old-soldier farmers out of Iowa;  
Hoe-wielders from the Indiana clay;  
A sunburnt plainsman who had fought the tribes;  
Lumberjacks from the camps in Michigan;  
Soft-voiced plantation-lords — aristocrats  
Unbowed by loss of slaves; hill-billy fiddlers  
Full of the music of the mountain brooks;  
A gold-seeker who dropped the battered sledge;  
A faro dealer with long curly hair  
And soft and guileless eye; gray schoolteachers;  
Carpenters out of cities in the east;  
Broken-down cowboys singing of the range;  
A widower dentist, spoken of as "Doc",  
And called about to heal the countryside;  
A bankrupt grocer; men from over sea,  
Danes, Germans, Swedes, and Irish, marrying wit  
To words misfashioned.

As a group, these men  
Scarce matched in vigor and resource the first  
Old pioneers who set adventurous feet  
In lonely wildernesses. Straggled in  
The empty-handed, weary with long years  
Of gainless toil; and the land-hungry came  
Like thirsty cattle to the shadowy pools.  
On hand and knee, young strength and old goodwill  
Combed through the matted grass for corner stones;  
And many a bold-heart brought his family,  
Their faces brightening like prairie flowers,  
To own a home.

Once more the world was new.  
It sunned itself in kindness and good will:  
Old women's gossip, chats by road and door;  
Singings and frolics; weddings, funerals;  
While love strode in to lighten evil days,  
And souls grew large with human sympathy.  
If eyes in solitary jealousies  
Burned, or men in their natural desires  
Should buzz like hornets to the tune of spite,  
Sad neighbors they.

A good world in the main.  
Jack borrowed here a horse or lent a plough;  
Saw pipes relighted while his summery mood  
Tongued his life story into friendly ears.  
Bess heard loud hoofbeats in the deepening dusk  
Bearing an eager lover, or she saw  
The hushed room, the white-aproned woman, all  
A mother's generosity of love  
Answering six months' acquaintance.

A new world!  
Once more began for worthy and unfit  
The shaking of the sieve that sorts to size.  
Men held up heads to a society  
Expectant of backbone. Who won the place  
Of underling had just himself to thank,  
Blame as he might his neighbors and his wife.  
Chance could not keep men equal; it could give  
More strength to all, — yet unto him that hath —.

. . . . .

Spring on the land, and meadow-larks a-singing!  
On Fairview Ridge, the joy of human neighbors, —  
And boys and girls with wonderful May weather  
In brave young hearts! Spring on the blossoming  
land!

## THE BANDED

Who are the banded? Gather from the four  
Broad winds one hundred strangers varying  
In tongue, age, disposition; set them down  
On the wild prairie where a neighbor's help  
Is priceless. Each has left an ordered world  
Where every wheel rolls on in its old rut  
To the expected stopping place, and men  
Make law of local patterns, local custom.  
How shall these hundred settlers find adjustment  
To their unsettled neighbors, and to thoughts  
Novel and startling, thoughts which fostering years  
May nourish to strange fruitage? 'Tis a problem  
Too large for human powers, infinite  
In nice complexities.

The spirit of life

Will draw this dusk confusion into form,  
Will shape the self of the neighborhood wherein,  
Like wheat straws in the bundle, men are bound,  
And press upon each other, bringing help  
Or harm not to be measured. Hate, and love,  
And hateful love, and loving hate, and low  
Passions that bind man to his brother beast,  
And wild sweet hopes, and airy fancies lifted  
Like a winged song half way from man to God,  
Must merge into the spirit of the group  
Which pipes for dancers, mourns to those that  
mourn,



Trains one wolfhound to charge the bristling pack,  
Pampers another into poodle form,  
And for a sulky brute lays a rod in brine.

Brutes may object to rods. Suppose the cur  
When threatened, snarls, when beaten, howls and  
bites;  
Dogs, children, wives, and neighbors swell the clam-  
or, —  
Bow-wow and boo-hoo, Fairview Ridge eruptive.

It's easier to start than end a fracas,  
And *status quo* may seem beyond the reach  
Of thought itself, demanding that each bristle  
Shall lie sleek on the dog, and not a tremor  
Stir in the extinct volcano.

Here the banded  
Fashion the fate of man. Who prays for blessing  
Shall ask for health, a clean soul, and good neigh-  
bors.

## NATHAN BRIGGS

Through two small windows sunshine slanted in  
To die upon the splintery schoolroom floor,  
While the October gusts whipped dirt and weeds  
Against the rough-hewn logs, or through loose chinks  
Sang, keying children's nerves to concert pitch.

At eleven fell a loud vehement fit  
Of knocking at the door. Little Ernest plumped  
Out of his seat, fell flat, and the children stared  
While the teacher turned the knob. There stood  
Nate Briggs

With face well smeared with dust, a bloody nose,  
Torn overalls, a cudgel in his hand,  
And eyes on fire with fury, and to her  
"Good morning, Mr. Briggs," showed teeth and  
barked,

"You whipped my little Willie yesterday,  
Because that cussed Jones girl pulled his hair.  
God damn the Joneses! By the holy golden" —  
swift,  
The door went shut in his face and the key was  
turned.

At noon the teacher wrote, and Arthur Flynn  
Galloped to the road and waited for the stage.  
In three days came the upshot. Nathan Briggs  
Sailed gloriously past the country store, —

Top buggy, driver with a spanking team, —  
To trudge back, two days later, coat on arm,  
Afoot, the thirty dusty miles from town.

A thresher's outfit close beside the road  
Had halted work to mend the driving belt.  
Began the grinning:

“H’lo Nate, where’ve you been?”  
“Sold your horse and buggy? Didn’t like to ride?”  
“You ought to have made the sheriff fetch you  
back.”

“What’s the fine for cussin’ schoolma’ams?” “Old  
man Jones

Says he wants to lick you agin; says he’d be glad  
To pay once more for his cattle in your corn  
For the pleasure of fightin’.” “Ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!  
We ain’t no schoolma’ams. You can’t frighten us  
By shakin’ your fist and cursin’.”

Nathan Briggs

Like a footsore dog toiled home. And glance, and  
gibe,

And grins like lashes fell where the bruisions ached.  
How to set right his world out-puzzled him.

Apologize, atone? Such acts require  
Romantic fineness, power to undertake,  
And will that stoops with a shoulder-load of blame  
Along the public road on a holiday.  
It was his wish that people should forget.

In spite of curse and clod, humiliations  
Dogged every step to make him hide his head.  
If his slow thoughts fermenting bitterly  
Did not burst out, some fostering spirit saved him.  
He set no foot off his farm for the next six months;  
Indeed, he thought of moving farther west.  
But folk need neighbors, time cures every woe,  
So this fault found oblivion. Once a year,  
Perhaps, some store-box winker may refer  
To the stylish buggy-ride of Nathan Briggs.

His young son had to bear the father's crimes  
At school, poor tearful champion of a love  
Already gibbeted. The teacher's care  
Guarded him when it might. And Mrs. Briggs  
Who had a reputation for currant jell  
Sent her a dozen glasses of the best.

## MISTER DWIGGINS

Bill Dwiggins had been Billy thirty years,  
A boyish name which piqued his clever wife,  
As if her man were ticketed light-weight  
Out here as in Ohio. He had land,  
A team, and stock. Let him be Mister now,  
Take office as assessor, constable,  
Or school director, and by slow degrees  
Grow into larger duties. It may be  
She had excuse, had suffered in old days  
The patronage of those whose men had hired  
Good-natured, easy Billy.

## Mister Dwiggins

Was huge, flat-bodied, moved with the swinging gait  
Of a slow, steady ox. I've seen him toil  
At knotty problems, tilted in his chair,  
In strained attention drawing on his pipe, —  
Bristly mustache, arched brows, uplifted eye.  
Now blessed be good counsel!

## His wife helped.

The slight, shawled figure with the sunny face  
Found welcome at the Ashbys; lively chat  
The Browers held with her; and she talked around  
With Butterpaugh, Embree, and Himmelblau,  
Casey, Flynn, Boyd, O'Reilley, McIntyre,  
Oltrogge, Davis, Matzybon, and Trinke,  
Fox, Martin, Marsh, King, Anderegg, and more,

They should uphold the interests of the Ridge  
By starting a literary.

Pettigrew

Helped by objecting. Four or five gave ear  
To his hoarse voice on mail-day as he sat  
On the puncheon bench outside, with big hat slouch-  
ing

To drooping shoulders. Thin, unsmiling lips  
Moved in that bony face, as steeped in sourness  
As if his soul were lined with colic-cramp.  
“Worthless performance — crude! Hoary debate  
On *Fire and Water*. Let the children speak  
At Christmas, Decoration, last of school.  
Paper bound to be bad; learns younger folk  
To disrespect their elders. And remember,  
‘For every idle word — in that last day.’ ”

Casey was holding match to his dudeen,  
Delaying answer; from the inner room  
A woman’s tones: “I’m glad you told me, Janet,  
How to make that melon pickle; Mister Dwiggin  
Has praised it over and over.” Then, in the door,  
Black lisle gloves found adjustment, and a smile  
Sentenced the culprit:

“O, there will be faults —  
Our faults which make us humble. But I like  
To work with those who put their whole hearts in, —  
And the spirit of the neighborhood, communion  
In sympathy, and in laughter — ”

“Vanity, woman!  
Folly and sin increase, while we pursue  
Idle frivolity.”

“Come and make that speech  
At the literary! ‘Thoughts, shut up, want air,  
And spoil like bales unopened to the sun.’ ”

“ ‘Let the women keep a silence in the churches!’ ”

“Nor laugh with one another. I pity his wife, —  
Married to such a bully! But we’ll sing  
Together, Janet, nor mind if pessimists  
Wear scratchy woollens.”

Deep, unbroken silence;  
Dazed by the indelicate word, Jim Pettigrew  
Kept glum eyes on the ground. His auditors  
Moved chuckling forth with gossip for their wives.

Standing room only, that November night;  
The aisles were full, the windows. Cheering rocked  
The schoolhouse when Bill Dwiggins, flushed with  
pride,  
As president-elect ended his speech, —  
There are who hint a woman wrote it for him, —  
And introduced the dentist to orate  
On Aaron Burr. The genial worthy stepped  
Square to mid-platform, gestured right and left —

A college medal glittering on his coat —  
Boomed in brave language:

“Lo, the beauteous  
Aurora had arisen in the majestic east,  
And shed long garnet beams across the surface  
Of the waters rippling in the morning breeze  
Like a sea of broken mirrors, and reflecting  
The shattered scintillations. Hudson’s cliffs  
With violets were sprinkled.” Fifteen minutes  
Of artificial flowers. His applause  
Was nigh an uproar.

Now two sisters sang;  
Their voices overflowed the little room,  
The bell-like alto lifting hopeless grief  
Till many eyes had tears. Next, children spoke  
Breitmann and Carleton ballads.

A recess.  
Young lads rushed out for moonlit pullaway;  
The organ drew the singers: *Vacant Chair*,  
*The Little Old Sod Shanty*, *Billy Boy*,  
*Tenting To-night*, *Sweet Afton*, *Rosy Nell*,  
And *Rocking on the Billows* had their turns;  
Then business meeting.



Truly, a success,  
This literary! Mister Dwiggins won  
The place of constable two successive years.  
Next fall he will be sheriff if he minds  
The counsel of Mrs. Dwiggins, — so men say;  
They call him Billy yet, but change the tone.

## THE CLAIM-JUMPER

## I

## AT HER DUGOUT

Because it's cut in the canyon bank, you looked  
For a rabbit hole with a window and a door?  
Come in; the supper's on the stove. You see  
Rag carpet, bright cretonne for the shelves. The  
lounge

And the table once were boxes. In September  
Goldenrod is my favorite, and I've filled  
Both vases. I shall have a handsome soddy  
After I prove up and pay off my debts;  
Saving is slow for schoolma'ams.

You will pardon

My going on to spread the cloth, I know,  
For you'll be hungry. O, that mound of sod  
Off yonder on the hill? That used to be  
The house that Jarvis built to jump my claim  
While I was teaching on the Frenchman Fork,  
Forty miles off. The neighbors tore it down.  
I didn't know! So terrible a chance  
For death or crippings! People feared him, too.  
Maybe in part his looks. He stooped by habit,  
As tall men stoop in following the plough.

From his sloping shoulders hung great length of  
arms

Ending in knobby fingers. His Adam's apple  
Made an elbow joint in trying to lift straight  
His shaggy, rough-hewn head. Wide flaring ears,  
Under the slouch of a big white hat, and eyes  
Rounder than common, hard bright blue, like mar-  
bles, —

Set, starey eyes. Maybe that's what scared people,  
Or just that he was a jumper. Someone came  
At night and shot three bullets through the stove-  
pipe

On my roof. Yes, I was here. — The biscuit need  
Another minute, and the baked potatoes  
Are done. I like the smell. — May have been Jarvis,  
As they said, or maybe not. With a needlegun  
He could pick an egg from a post at a hundred yards.  
The law? I was at law. Law isn't everything.  
Too much set rules, delays, and costs, and fees.

You see, I had a right to earn my living.  
I had to! I wish the government official  
Who says continuous residence just means,  
'Sleep on your claim once every thirty days  
Or lose your right, —' I wish he had to teach  
Forty miles from his dugout all the winter,  
Drive all day Saturday up and down canyons  
So steep the buckboard's all the team can manage, —  
And walking safer, — and in the drifts, or the wind  
On the open prairie, — spend one night in the dugout,

And Sunday driving back. This year my school-  
house

Is only six miles off, and there's no Jarvis.

I'll tell you all about him after supper.

How do you have your tea? One lump, or two?

I like them crisp and brown and piping hot.

My cousin sent this tea from New York City.

## II

## THE JUMPER

'Twas brisk October, and the sun was down  
When Mrs. Kinsey bringing in some wood  
Heard a rattling wagon pass on to the draw;  
Its clatter increased, ended in a thud, —  
Silence — then muffled calls. She rushed to the road.  
At the bottom of the slope a wagon box  
Lay upside down, cries came from underneath.  
The team, still fastened to the running gears,  
Stood quiet.

“Are you hurt?”

“No, not much hurt.

Lift off the box!”

“And you, who may you be?”

“I’m Jarvis. Help me out!”

Mrs. Kinsey paused.

“No, Mr. Jarvis, you have jailed yourself.  
I leave you. When my husband comes, he may  
Help you if he likes.”

“But woman, O my God!”

"I help no thief to steal a woman's claim!"

"By law — help me, my shoulder hurts."

"The law!

And her in debt establishing her rights!  
Anyway, I can't lift it." She paid no heed  
To his shouts while she unhooked and tied his team.

The first soft moonlight mellowed all the draw  
When farmer Kinsey tilted the big box,  
And Jarvis crawled out. Silently the two  
Set all to rights. If Jarvis's left arm  
Was painful, he could use it as he pushed  
The singletree with his leg, and hooked the tugs.  
Kinsey's slow voice was vibrant. "Better stay here,  
To-night."

"Thank you, I can't. My pigs and cow  
Need food and water."

"Well, you better stay.  
Yes, true, my wife won't have you in the house.  
But you can sleep in the shed. Wait, listen to me!  
Stay here!"

"You think there's danger at my place."  
The shoulders lifted, and the wide mouth gave  
Tones harsh and rigorous as granite stone.  
"I've had their threats. Some will go home in boxes.  
I won't be scared nor bullied, not by fifty."

"Jarvis, I think you know that if you shoot,  
The boys will make a sieve of you. Otherwise,  
They'll have a frolic with feathers and rail.  
I'm not your friend; perhaps I run a risk.  
But you can sleep in the hay."

"One minute, Kinsey!

As to the lie that says I went at night  
Shooting at that girl's dugout, — I'm no such fool.  
If I could find who did it I would make him  
Eat the dirt of the stable. First I knew  
Was when the store refused me credit. The neighborhood

Is ready to mob me, and I've got to kill  
Or be killed, and it's God damn tough on me!"  
He spoke from the wagon, and his eyes were fixed  
Where the rough track climbed the steep bank ahead.

The horses trotted. Jarvis let his thought  
Move with the wagon's rattling tune. Such a group  
Would not be ready to start till after ten,  
Or maybe midnight. Everyone in it, of course.  
Claim jumpers have no friends. These men would  
find

His rifle held sixteen bullets. He would be glad  
At last to have it out. For all these months  
He had stood them off. And yet, what end, what  
end?

He looked about. Perhaps his last of nights.  
A gentle breeze, such moonlight, and the stars  
Pouring soft splendor. All the prairie rolled  
As in enchanted beauty. Why remain  
To see the harshness, ugliness, the day  
Must soon bring back for him? The children hid  
If he passed on the road. Men would not speak;  
And women would not speak but only look.  
His hide was not so tough but he could feel, —  
This Kinsey woman, now! —

Well, when he came,  
The claims were taken, and no good land left  
Unless by jumping. Once you jump, you must  
Go on to win, to justify yourself  
In the teeth of all who fight you.

A way out?  
Was it like his father's garden? Crabgrass grew;  
His father only cursed, and next year's planting  
Was choked the sooner with the help of sandburs.  
Lay hand to the roots! The worst is not the fighting;  
But standing alone, with no one to give help,  
To laugh with you, to think in sympathy,  
More than with a steer goaded on to a cattle car.  
Life is too short. Unless there's more in the world  
Than law and guns —. Is there no happier spot  
With friends, and neighbors, and companionship,  
And laughter, and a home? His horses love him,  
Will follow with dumb nosings; and to-night



---

It seems the prairie loves him while the moon  
Touching its beauty tenderly, —

Bosh! The fall  
Had jolted worse than he thought, for his shoulder  
ached.

The pigs reproached him as he reached the yard;  
The cow called softly. Once their wants relieved  
He threw in the wagon some small movables,  
And drove off the back way and down the draw.

## III

## JARVIS WAITED

The moon was down when a knock at Kinsey's door  
Brought the wakeful man of the house. "Come in!

Come in!

What has happened? Are you hurt?"

"O no, not hurt.

I'm going away — must leave my cow and pigs;

And farming tools and junk about the place.

Will you look after it? I'll give ten per cent.

Of what they sell for."

"Sure, sure I will.

Never mind the per cent. What's your address?"

"Don't know. I'll write. Some place to make a  
start,

A home in the world. A man can fight, and fight,

But he needs a rest. I saw the mob a-tearing

My house all down, I heard their oaths and abuse,

And didn't shoot, but, — well, good-bye."

"Good-bye."

The voice of Mrs. Kinsey sounded now:

"Best make a writing so people will understand

What you are doing, Kinsey. And Kinsey, say!

Tell Jarvis to wait. I'll fix a basket up.  
Some eggs and fresh baked bread and a pie and  
jelly.

This camping out by the road is a kind of hardship  
When a man does the cooking."

Doubly harsh, —  
Kindness from those who cursed you. Yet I've seen  
Before an opening door the trembling eyes  
Of a homeless hound; and something of that image  
Takes shape when I recall the lamplight glow  
Flung through the door and framed in by the dark  
On that gaunt figure. What could be the stress  
Of feeling in the outcast though his hide  
Be thick and coarse! Not on sod walls alone  
The banded struck.

In silence Jarvis waited.

## **The Neighborhood III**

By EDWIN FORD PIPER

JOE TAYLOR

September afternoon. The farmers' teams  
In Belford all along the straggling street  
Stamped drowsily at flies. The rough board walk  
Sounded from bank to corner store where stood  
Joe Taylor in blue denims, wide straw hat,  
Tall, burly, ruddy. His clear eyes looked hard  
At a wagon trailed by dust in its noisy rush  
From the livery. The blacksnake swung, the horses  
Leaped on the bits, the driver's comrade gripped  
The spring seat, while a huge man stood behind,  
Yelling hoarse words. Traffic was paralyzed.  
A staring hush fell over sunbonnets,  
Bare heads out of the stores, and childish curls  
Lifted to see.

“Any man in this town!  
I'll give him fifty dollars if he licks me!”

From the street end the wagon made return,  
The charioteering bully bellowing  
Insults profane. “No man? All cowards? Fifty  
dollars!  
You bob-tailed, weasel-eyed, scared puppies, you!  
You stinking bastards!”

“The town marshal, where?”

Asked women. That defender lay dead drunk  
At the livery stable. Bearded men felt arms  
With heavy muscles. Such a strutter's comb  
Demanded cutting.

Back the charioteer  
Swooped in a cloud of dust, pouring abuse  
And filth upon all heads. Joe halted him,  
Lifting a big right hand. “I do not live  
In Belford, but I'll fight you.”

“Where's your home?”

“On Fairview Ridge.”

Down sat the fighting man,  
And in the slowly moving wagon rose  
His comrade up to ring a bell, and shout,  
“Fi-i-ight! On the creek ba-n-nk!”

First the hero's car,  
Then Joe marched sturdily, while men and boys,  
A cavalcade in a great smoke of dust,  
Streamed after. From the sidewalk one high voice  
Remonstrant, — “Joseph Taylor, if your wife  
Was here, she'd — ”

Under trees a grassy plot,  
A ring of faces, little jets of talk.

"Three men last week at Kearney." "Nearly killed —

Bird City." "Ain't got nothing over Joe in size, — six foot, a hundred ninety." "Odds? Don't bet. The bruiser is profesh." "Living too fast."

"Young bucks get mad." "No use, Joe can't back out!

You get a dog by the ears, you can't let go."

Joe made no sign of hearing; to choice of gloves  
He only shook his head.

"Your cash, my lad.  
Only twenty dollars, boy? Don't fool with me!"  
Contempt blared in the tone.

"I have no more.  
I give you this to fight. You need not pay  
Me anything if I win."

"You? Win? Ha-ha!  
Ha-ha!"

"Then fight for this!" Joe's bare hand  
sounded  
Upon the boaster's cheek.

An old-time game  
Is rough and tumble; thus wild men fought beasts.  
Grip, wrestle, strike, on ground, and now on knee.

Blows fall with dull sound, muscles swell and stretch;  
Fighters puff, grunt, and sweat, and gather dust;  
The hot, moist skin slips in the finger clutch.  
With nostrils wide, strained eye, and bloody face,  
Garments in shreds, they struggle with a rage  
And craft and will beyond the power of brutes.

Twenty long minutes of such give and take,  
The bully's breath came scant. Joe pressed him  
hard,  
And wore him under, and struck heavily  
Until the prizer cried — "Enough."

Joe rose,  
Wiped bloody face, drew out the yellow bill,  
Thrust it upon the speechless one, and turned  
Back to the village.

Ruddy sunset gleams  
Fell richly all about Joe, jogging home  
With empty wagon, musing how he bought  
A fight with money borrowed at the bank  
To buy seed grain, and won therefrom an eye  
Discolored, and a lip grotesquely swollen,  
Bruisings and weariness. "I wonder what  
My wife — O, I'm a fool! But how explain?  
And yet, — I couldn't help it after all."

## THE PARTY

### MOON-WORSHIP

*I hear them singing in the open spaces  
The old, old rites, the music of the moon;  
The rougher and the sweeter voices blending  
To lift the joyous tune.*

*I see them dancing in the open spaces  
As moonlit nights grow long;  
Clasped hands and circling steps and charmed faces,  
And witchery of song.*

*A harmony of hearts to rule the singing  
As loud and low they croon;  
I see them dancing in the open spaces  
The worship of the moon.*



## I

## THE GATHERING

Father and Mother Lawrence, the boy Joe,  
Lottie and Elsie, all were full of life,  
And fond of company. Their new sod house  
Boasted four rooms. The first play-party fell  
To them by luck and privilege.

That night gave  
A full moon silvering all the autumn grass,  
Big stars, a deep sky, and the fresh, sweet notes  
Of young folk singing as the wagons rolled  
On to the Lawrence house.

What jollity  
Of hearty greeting! How the spirit of mirth  
Beams in the twinkling eyes of Daddy Lawrence!  
I've seen him laugh among the harvest help  
From his toes upward, his plump body shaking,  
His hair one breeze of merriment; to-night  
His round and ruddy face as yet but smiles.  
Gracious and motherly the welcoming  
Of Mrs. Lawrence; son and daughters join  
Good comradeship with a fine courtesy  
To happy guests. Nell Davis trips in first,  
A lively blonde with nose tip-tilted; clumps  
In her tow a bashful youth whose shiny face  
Displays its freckles as gooseberry jam

Makes show of seeds; now enters Arabella,  
The cowgirl who can conquer a wild pony;  
Sam Violet, conscious of his first mustache, —  
With him his sisters, Ella, Jessie, just  
Arrived last week from Elgin, Illinois,  
Ready of laugh and word; three giantesses,  
Blonde, tanned, the Andersons; they till the fields,  
Having no brothers; then the bullet heads  
And round, stiff bodies of the Baker boys;  
Lou Silver's coming animates the room  
Like living music; 'tis a gentle face,  
As delicate as a flower, Ann Wilson lifts  
In greeting; Barney McIntyre holds high  
His dark-curled head; close at his elbow grins  
Jed Butterpaugh the bashful; comes a ripple  
Of wholesome, happy girls, Rose, Bessie, Jane,  
And Margaret; then three Brandstetter brothers,  
Ample of girth, and rusty haired.

The house

Grows crowded, guests move to the moonlit grass,  
Where laughters rise, and merry voices chat  
In lively melody.

Joe Lawrence calls,

"Your partners! Form the lines for *Old Brass Wagon*."

## II

## THE GAMES

Luck makes him head, he meets it pranksomely,—  
Dapper Ulysses, five feet in his boots,  
And proud as Satan of a black mustache  
Would grace a Spanish pirate; half a hand  
In the wheat, first class at baking. Buxom Sue  
Towers last in the line of girls; she could pitch  
bundles

All day for any partner: mirth arises  
To see them countering between the ranks,  
First shuttles in the good old weaving game,  
The blithesome maze of the Virginia reel:

“Meet half way to your best liking,  
Meet half way to your best liking,  
Meet half way to your best liking,  
You’re the one, my darling!

“Lead ’er up an’ down the old brass wagon,  
Lead ’er up an’ down the old brass wagon,  
Lead ’er up an’ down the old brass wagon,  
You’re the one, my darling!

“Wheel an’ turn the old brass wagon,  
Wheel an’ turn the old brass wagon,  
Three wheels off an’ the axle draggin’,  
You’re the one, my darling!”

The seven stanzas near monotony  
When each has led the weaving. Welcome change  
Is the graceful round of a good old harvest dance:

“O, it rains, and it hails, and it’s cold stormy  
weather;  
In comes the farmer, drinking up cider.  
I’ll be the reaper if you’ll be the binder,  
I’ve lost my true love and I cannot find her.”

They race through *Tansy* with a merry speed  
Before the circle spins into rollicking rings  
In the whirls of “Three by three with a polkay O!”

“O, great big sheep jumped over the meetin’  
house,  
Over the meetin’ house, over the meetin’ house,  
Great big sheep jumped over the meetin’ house,  
Down in Alabama!”

Some echo rises as from age-old rites  
In *Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley. Weevilly Wheat*  
Times lightsome dancers, then, a flouting song  
With a flower for the girl, a gibe to tease the boy:

“O, now we’ve got the little red rose,  
The little red rose, the little red rose;  
And now we’ve got the little red rose  
So early in the morning!  
Go choose you out a partner,  
The prettiest you can find.

“And now we’ve got the old plough horse,  
The old plough horse, the old plough horse; —”

Comes *Happy Miller* with its round of shifts;  
Then *Chase the Squirrel*; boys and girls in lines,  
With the head couple dancing through and back:

“Up and down the center we go,  
Up and down the center we go,  
Up and down the center we go  
This cold and frosty morning!

“Now’s the time to chase that squirrel,  
Now’s the time to chase that squirrel, —”

The girl runs round the rank of girls, the boy  
Circles at speed the rank of boys in hope  
Of sweet reward in the lane. The lads take space  
Lengthening the line to see the pursuer puff:

“Catch her and kiss her if you can, —”

And he may catch her if luck favors him,  
Otherwise, — he is chaffed for running slow.

Voices need rest. Youth turns with lively relish  
To coffee and fried chicken, rolls and cakes,  
Doughnuts and pies. An hour of chat and laughter;  
Then the cool moon may spill its gracious ease

On what might else seem awkward, while the space  
Lends harmony to youthful voices blent  
In folk-tunes of the good old courtship games,  
Where dancing is the maid, romance the lady:  
*Juniper Tree, We're Marching Round the Levee,*  
*Here Comes a Loving Couple, Lazy Mary,*  
Then the lively turns of *The Girl I Left Behind Me,*  
With, *Here She Stands*, and a partners' march for  
ending:

“We are marching down to old Quebec,  
And the drums are loudly beating;  
The Americans have gained the day,  
And the British are retreating.

“The war's all o'er, and we'll turn back  
To the place from whence we started;  
We'll open the ring, and choose a couple in  
To see if they'll prove true hearted.”

The moon is rolling half-way down the sky  
When the last wagon rumbles to the road;  
And you hear *Suwanee River, Old Black Joe,*  
And *Annie Laurie*, sweet and faint and far,  
Dying in silver haze along the hills.

O prairie spaces, joyous boys and girls,  
Youth, and romance, and music of the moon!

## THE KEY

He turned in at the gate and asked a drink;  
Shabby, but neat of garment. His white hat  
Drooped over friendly eyes; his face was clean,  
Ascetic. Surly Towser wagged to greet  
His coming, and my timid little boy  
Smiled him a welcome. The tramp's easy voice  
Came slow and musical.

“Have you a need  
For some repairs on woodwork, furniture?  
Yes? Food will pay me.”

His lean hands were deft  
Over an injury the walnut desk  
Met in its journey. Pulsings from within,  
Some charm from an intensity of spirit,  
Marked the man while he worked.

He laid a key  
On the cloth by his plate, and bowed his head.  
Ending the meal he gently spoke:

“My house, —  
A four room house, I built it by the stream.  
The woodthrush sings, the quail are very tame,  
And nested orioles and bluebirds flit  
Where the wild grape is matted in the trees.  
Wild flowers nod, and the untrodden grass

Waves in the soft wind, hearkening the while  
To the sweet water running. Little boy,  
You can come to my house and bring your smile.  
I thank you now. The food was very good.  
Yes, I have friends. No matter for their names.  
This is my key. I go to find my house.  
I made the prettiest furniture for it.  
Good-bye to you, and thank you once again."

His sad eyes smiled farewell; he took the road,  
A lean and stooping trampler by the streams.  
The key seemed like a symbol from such quest  
As mothers old romance. His limp, subdued,  
Hinted that he had come a weary way.



## THE DRIVER

## I

## AT THE POST-OFFICE

It was a gray, midwinter afternoon.  
A noisy wind pursued the fine hard flakes  
Of blinding snow, and piled sharp, ridgy drifts  
Where swale or grass gave shelter. The front room  
At Fiddler's house held loungers waiting mail.  
Over the checkerboard hung four or five;  
With head turned down and nose to wall, one stooped  
In the dim light to read newspaper print  
Pasted upon the plaster. Brady moved  
From the ruddy stove to the window. "Six hours  
late."

"He'll come. He's Uncle Sam's man. Pretty slow  
Through drifts. He'll stay all night, and travel  
Sunday  
To make two trips this week." So Fiddler drawled,  
Thumping a cob pipe on his heavy boot.

With fingers upon eyes, the man at the wall  
Straightened and stretched. "This time I read her  
through!  
How come you paste that paper bottom up,  
About Guiteau a-shooting Garfield? Gosh!  
A man can't hold the sense."

“I’ll use more care  
Next spring when I repaper; these are yellow  
With age and smoke.”

“I see him on the hill!”  
Came Brady’s voice.

“Bert, fix up, take his team;  
He’ll be nigh froze,” called Fiddler to his son.  
Out of the buckboard stiffly climbed the man  
Wrapped in great coat and scarf, and looming tall  
Beside his ponies, gently freed from ice  
Their eyes and mouths, instructing Bert with care  
Concerning feed and water. He came in  
While Fiddler sorted mail, and stooping, spread  
His rough, dark hands to the warmth. Above his  
beard  
His cheeks were weather-dark; a great scar seamed  
His forehead. He laughed back to hearty words  
From men who had come miles for letters, papers,  
And now moved out to the storm.

At dusk our fire  
Roared, while outside through creaking trees, the  
wind  
Exulted.

“What’s your route like?”

“Up this creek,  
Cross the divide, back down Old Sandy. Twice  
A week, about a hundred forty miles.  
Monotonous? Most men know little road,  
Travel on fair days. I have shift of light  
And weather upon changing scenes. This stream  
Elbows round bluffs that shoulder in to choke  
The woods and the valley. Farther up, the groves  
Of willow, ash, and elm thin out to a line;  
Beyond the headsprings, lonely cottonwoods  
Bulk huge above the plum and cherry thickets;  
Last, buckberry and ironweed fringe the ditch  
Until the canyon ends. On the high divide  
The sky is set far back, and the prairie runs  
For miles and miles. Your eye can just make out  
On clearest days, far to the north, the crests  
Of sandhills. Now head down the other creek.  
One bit of road there, — say in blossom time, —  
A soft wind soaked plumb full of meadow smells  
And fluttering the leaves, — with oriole,  
Brown thrasher, blackbird, bluebird, meadow-lark  
A-chirrup and a-trill, — one lazy fleece-cloud —  
The green and the sunshine — I’ve heard about a  
place,  
All things perfected: there’s that stretch of road.

Of course, it changes. August brings a drouth;  
The dust dries in the sweat upon your face.  
All months have storms; these blizzards are the  
worst.

A mile to-day is plenty; thirty miles,  
The frost gets into the marrow of your bones,  
It tires your blood and your will. Now these men  
here

Wanted their mail, expected it; and I, —  
I brought it. Driving mail is hard to stop.  
When the contract ends you're tempted two years  
more.

Seven years at seventy a month! Maybe  
I'll change next summer. Ponies are too small  
To farm, and I don't want to sell them off.  
They might receive abuse. Poor brutes, poor brutes!  
Relay as you will, road-life is hard for them."

"You've had adventures."

He slowly shook his head.

"No, mostly weather. I used to have a soft  
And ruddy face like little Mabel there.  
You've seen a board under the wind and sun  
And rain and sleet. It wears and warps a man  
Into my shape."

Came Fiddler's easy drawl:

"Tell us about the time they stopped the mail,  
When you got the scar."

The child's voice fluted in,

"Mother says, come to supper."

We drew round  
The kitchen table. Coffee, steak, potatoes  
Were richly odorous; conversation fell.  
Our hostess saw and did, but seldom spoke;  
Neat, matronly, low-voiced, with gracious eyes  
That guessed and answered thoughts. In that low  
room,  
In the mellow lamplight, hospitality  
Admitted us to see the tender glow  
Of family love; and as we broke the bread,  
We knew the blessing, while we heard without  
The storm's white fury moving through the dark.

## II

## IN A PUBLIC PLACE

We men and little Mabel had drawn near  
To the purr of the great heater. She was whispering  
Night-counsel to her dolly. Fiddler's voice  
Boomed slow: "We want the story of the scar,  
And the highwaymen."

That mark went white and red.  
"No, I can't! Ain't worth while. Fiddler, you, —  
You know a-plenty stories, for you made  
The first house and first well along this road.  
We'll smoke and listen."

Fiddler nothing loath  
Of spokesmanship began. "There's Beaver office —  
Down stream, you know. The country was just new.  
The government was called on, but a woman  
Settled the matter.

"In a two room shack,  
Jim Lane and Mrs. Lane and three grown girls  
Kept the office. Maybe sixty dollars pay  
A year for stamps he cancels. Folks for mail  
All hours, and every day, and not convenient  
People should just walk in.

"There was a lad,  
An old bach nigh on forty years of age,

Named Charley Baxter, lived off on the ridge,  
A cousin to the Baxters up above,  
Set in his way, respecting his own word  
As if from Scripture. Like old Shakespeare said,  
'Now when I speak, let all the dogs keep still.'  
This Baxter fellow would walk in at Lane's,  
No ceremony. And Mrs. Lane, she said,  
Real easy, not at all correcting like,  
'Charley, it ain't convenient for us folks.  
Why don't you knock? We'll open up the door.'

"'Because,' says Baxter, 'this is a public place;  
Government office. I come in when I like.'

"'You'd better not,' she says; 'this is my house,  
And now you got your mail, clear out of it!'

"'I'd stay,' says he, 'but the men are waiting for me  
In the road to go a-threshing!'

"Old man Lane,  
Dodger of trouble, wanted to resign.  
The neighbors wouldn't hear it. All the roads  
Run by his house. Government couldn't find  
Another man to take it. Baxter would,  
But frightful roads to his place.

"Months rolled on,  
This Baxter fellow raspin' at the Lanes,  
And folk a-grinnin' at him 'bout his rights,  
Just like a pack of schoolboys set to tease  
Some chap that's easy mad.

“ 'Bout six o'clock

One April morning, he went to Lane's door,  
Opened and started in. Lane, doin' chores,  
Heard shrieking, run, laid holt and jerked him out;  
And they begun. Now Lane was getting old;  
Baxter soon had him under pounding him.  
But Mrs. Lane come charging on the scene,  
Soon changed all that. She grabbed a garden rake;  
The iron teeth tore Baxter's shirt away,  
And scratched his scalp, and notched him in the ear;  
His hat come off while he was fighting Lane.  
She chased him, raked him good while he was rolling  
Under the barbed wire out into the road,  
And threw his black hat after him.

“Old man Ryan

Was passing with a load, and so the story  
Didn't lose nothing from the Irishman  
That had the telling of it.

“Charley Baxter

Couldn't give in. Ridicule, too. Some fellow  
Say 'garden rake' and Charley'd try to whip him.  
He wanted law, and swore to the J. P.  
That Lane assaulted him in a public place.

“They all with old man Ryan, up to Stevens's  
To try to settle it. The justice sat,  
Heard everything all parties had to say, —  
Baxter oratin' on the rights of man, —  
Rubb'd his bald head, looked in the book of statutes;  
Took three chews of tobacco, passed the plug;



Says, 'Out of my jurisdiction: for all turns  
On whether Lane's house is a public place,  
Or whether the office is a private dwelling.  
The statutes are silent. I will write to Washington.  
Meantime the court will order peace be kept,  
And costs assessed to the plaintiff.'

“Government

At Washington ain't in a hurry. They've  
A lot to think of. Finally come word,  
'Tell Charley Baxter that he'll have to knock.'  
And Mrs. Lane wrote: 'Baxter ain't been here  
For ten months. If he comes, we'll make him  
knock.' ”

“What did the fellow do about his mail?”

“Changed his address to town. 'Twas fifteen mile.  
And two years afterwards he left these parts;  
I don't know what become of him, — went west.”

## III

## THE MAN WITH THE KEY ONCE MORE

Our pipes drummed brisk approval; we refilled.  
Fiddler enjoyed slow whiffs. "I wish I knew  
The way to tell a thing. This is a man  
A-looking for a house to fit his key."

"What! Him? Heard of him lately?"

"No."

The driver  
Sat bolt upright. "That's the lad helped me out  
When I got this." A finger touched the scar.  
Somewhere a cricket chirped; the storm was loud;  
Fiddler stowed chunks in the heater, and flame petals  
Curled eagerly about them.

"It was five,  
No, six years back, and farther up the creek.  
You see, he always follows streams. I heard  
Two men a-riding up behind, and looked,  
But didn't know 'em. Suddenly, my head  
Went busted on a loaded club. I lay  
In the dirt and couldn't move. They started cutting  
The mail bags loose. In front, over a rise  
'Bout sixty yards away he came. They saw him.  
One fired and missed. Maybe to scare him,

Maybe, — the nerves of a new hand. He just kept walking;

They grabbed the bags and rode. The government Gave them a contract down at Leavenworth.

He brought me water, and he drove me back

To the next house, and I laid off one trip.

Six years ago. I saw him just once since."

"About this house, this key?" I ventured.

"O,"

Drawled Fiddler; "it's his house, but it isn't there.

He keeps the key and carries it all round."

"Yes, an imagined house? The perfect place

You'd build if you were rich?"

"No, this was real.

A house he built upon his claim. The land

Was river bottom. Came a flood. We think

We know the rains. It pours half a day.

Come three, four days together, local fall

And upstream waters joining, make the floods

Our fathers tell of. So the river bed

Got shifted, muxed his fields, and spread fine sand

Deep on his crops. The house was gone. Nobody

Would recognize the place; then he went looney,

And goes a-lookin', lookin'."

Mrs. Fiddler

Had put the little girl to bed and come  
To sit in the rocker. Easy music lived  
In her quiet voice. "I know, he told me once,  
Or tried to tell. And my sister wrote about him.  
A girl was coming out to be his wife;  
Clear from Ohio, by herself. He went  
To the railroad town, and waited. No trains came  
Because of floods, and no news, for the wires  
Went down. He waited, heard of wrecks;  
Still waited trembling, till the third day brought  
The list of killed, her body.

"He turned back,  
Alone, the forty miles. The flood had drowned  
His farm, — left just such ruin in his mind.  
The stream's bed where the garden used to be.  
The suffering of it isn't understood  
Until you see the man." Her low tones ceased,  
The tears were in her eyes.

We studied, moveless,  
The dull glow of the stove, and the clicks of the fire  
Till the driver's voice began with little jars,  
As when a wagon wheel grinds on the brake.  
"I hope he's in a good warm house to-night. —  
It's time to find our bunks. What a roar in the woods  
Of the wind and the snow!—This man — he scarcely  
changes!  
The ants soon honeycomb a log in the grass.

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Life shines and showers, or blows and drips on the  
mind,  
And burns and freezes. Something in his nature —

“Be nasty roads to-morrow, even if  
The storm dies down, and tough on pony flesh.”

## Enhallowed

By HARTLEY B. ALEXANDER

There is a wreath upon her brow,  
That none may see, that none may see,  
Save only him that sees it now  
And unremittingly.

Of gold it is, of palest gold,  
And threaded through with patterned line,—  
Like some rare broidery of old  
And delicate design.

About her brow it turns and twines,  
All shot with sunny rays,  
And, oh, it is a symbol of  
The loveliness that plays  
Like golden mists fall'n from above  
To dew with gold her days.

About her brow it twines and turns,  
An holy mystery,  
And there are thorns amid the vines  
And drops that ruby be;  
And, oh, when it so redly burns,  
It is her Calvary.

Yea, pain and love are in it wrought,  
Like lucent flowers of Paradise,—  
The sainted halo that is caught  
From out her quiet eyes.

It is the wreath that crowns her brow,  
That none may see, that none may see,  
Save only him that gives his vow  
All unremittingly.

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### Song

By ELINOR CHIPP

Far off across the ocean,  
Far off across the sea,  
There stands a laddie singing,  
Who does not think of me.

He sees the blue sea shining,  
He sees the level sands;  
He does not see a maiden  
Who stands with outstretched hands.

He does not see the green trees  
That guard our cottage way;  
He only sees the curlews  
And white ships on the bay.

**END OF VOLUME THREE**



